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There can only be one priority for the UN in Nepal today and that is peace - Robert Piper

Following is an interview given by UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal Mr. Robert Piper to Mr. Achuyt Wagle, Correspondent of a monthly local magazine "New Business Age" last week.



United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. Robert Piper.
File Photo: UNIC

1. What is the present focus of UN assistance to Nepal? Have the priorities changed after secession of hostilities in 2006?

There can only be one priority for the UN in Nepal today and that is peace of course. Alongside our colleagues in UNMIN who have a specific and crucial role to play in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the development and humanitarian arms of the UN are doing their bit too.

Over the short-term, our assistance buys time for the longer term transition process to start showing results. And it helps tackle the issues that simply can't wait, with the Millennium Development Goals as 'guide posts'. The UN Population Fund's support to strengthening reproductive health services for example. UNICEF's community-managed micro-nutrient initiative to help deal with the severe consequences of malnutrition. UNESCO's work on literacy. WHO's efforts to eliminate leprosy. The critical work of UNAIDS and the Office for Drugs and Crime on HIV/Aids and drug use.

Over the short to medium-term, we are doing our best to assist Nepal deal with threats that put Nepal's precious development gains at risk. The two million food insecure reached by WFP for example. UN-Habitat's assistance on shelter policy. OCHA's disaster preparedness and contingency planning work. FAO and IFAD's efforts towards improving food security and improving agriculture;

Over the longer-term, we are here to help deal with the core elements of this historic transition. The root causes of yesterday's suffering and the core components of tomorrow's stability and prosperity. For example, OHCHR's efforts to help Nepal move from impunity to accountability, from discrimination to inclusion. ILO's work on jobs for youth. The UN Capital Development Fund's focus on making local Government services more effective. Or UNIFEM's support to women Constituent Assembly members and UNDP's Centre for Constitutional Dialogue.

Our Humanitarian Team – with our NGO partners – are trying hard to work themselves out of a job, despite the chronic humanitarian challenges of this country with floods, droughts, mud slides and forest fires a routine occurrence. While the Government and its international friends want to close the chapter on Nepal's 'humanitarian phase', we still see around us alarming indicators that tell a story of ongoing, silent suffering. Of malnutrition rates as bad as anywhere in the world. Of

deaths from contaminated water sources and poor sanitation.

2. Nepal has virtually failed to provide a 'peace dividend' to the Nepali people even after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. What do you think is the reason of this failure?

International experience has indeed shown the importance of delivering a peace dividend in the aftermath of a conflict. This helps re-establish the population's confidence in the state and their confidence in the peace process. I think Nepal's population has seen some evidence of a peace dividend in fact – for example, greatly improved security in many parts of the country, a surge in citizenship certificates, dramatic increases in the size of VDC block grants and new social policies that are unequivocally pro-poor. But the vacuum in legitimate elected leadership at the local level is putting a massive break on local development. Too many new national policies are also facing serious implementation problems. And perhaps most importantly, there has hardly been any growth in the real economy so jobs remain as scarce as they were three years ago when the CPA was signed.

3. How are the post-conflict economic prospects for Nepal?

Nepal has much going for it of course. A young, vibrant population. Great natural resources. Access to two of the fastest growing economies in the world. The potential for decent economic growth in the coming years is there. For that to happen, the government needs to create a favourable environment in which both foreign and domestic investors are willing to come in and help. The hydropower sector springs to mind as an area with significant potential for development and economic growth, as does tourism. But economic growth and investment depends on political stability and a steady hand on the policy-tiller.

4. It is by now apparent that Nepal is unlikely to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Where does the main bottleneck lie?

Well, I wouldn't put it so negatively. Nepal is actually on track to meet many of the MDGs, at least at the national level. Some of the goals will need greater effort than others to attain by 2015 but the overall story is quite positive. The important exception is the MDG goal relating to hunger and malnutrition. Here Nepal is way off target. Over 3 million people in Nepal still go to bed hungry and malnutrition levels in children less than 5 years of age are among the highest in the world.

Yet even where these numbers are much more positive – income indicators or maternal mortality for example - this progress towards the MDGs of the last 15 years has been very unevenly shared. In reality some communities are already either well on-track to achieving the goals by 2015 or have even surpassed the targets, while other groups have yet to see significant change. While Brahmin men enjoy literacy rates of over 90% and Madhesi Dalit women less than 20%, the quality of Nepal's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals has to be questioned.

5. Nepal is considering another 3-year interim plan instead of a full five-year plan. Do you think it is the right strategy?

I have enormous confidence in the Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission who brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the task. I am also convinced this is the right call. In such a period of transition and given the considerable uncertainty that comes with such a transition process, a five year plan would risk looking irrelevant half way through the cycle. For example, the restructuring of the state to be decided under the new constitution will have profound consequences for development planning. It is impossible to anticipate what this will look like yet.

6. A few agencies like WB, ADB and DFID have been doing joint consultations for several years now but the UN is not taken onboard. Why?

The UN System is very much on board in terms of coordination with other development partners. We work closely with all three of these actors as we do with others. It's important to note though, that the UN does not claim to be a 'donor' as such. This doesn't keep us from coordinating with the donor community, which we do extensively, but we are conscious that our role is necessarily different. We converge as 'Development Partners' rather than 'donors' as such. Nepal's donors are the UN's donors as well remember. These donors expect us to play a different role to what they can do bilaterally. The Government of Nepal also has different expectations of us, given Nepal sits on our various governance Boards and is an important Member State of the UN.

7. Is there any reorganization in the patterns of UN support to Nepal?

Overall, our support to Nepal is worked out under a 'UN Development Assistance Framework', which in turn is in line with government's development priorities. This framework has been agreed to and endorsed by the government and that is what governs the partnership for the duration of the UNDAF (currently 2008-2010). After the new three year interim plan has been approved, the UN will in turn review its UNDAF to bring it in line with the government's new plan.

At the programming level, we are seeing a shift – world

wide – by Governments who want to use the UN's expertise less for traditional sectoral project, and more for what I call 'horizontal' development challenges that cut across the Cabinet Room. Issues like youth, climate change, bonded labour, or HIV-Aids that require an inter-ministerial and therefore (on the UN side) inter-agency approach as well. Look out for many more 'Joint Programmes' where multiple UN agencies collaborate to help address complex, intractable development challenges that can't be fixed with traditional 'vertical' approaches.

8. What do you think is the main problem of Nepal's perpetuated poverty?

I think that the development issues that Nepal has been and still is struggling with, are extremely complex. There are no easy answers, no single 'problem' that once solved will open the doors to prosperity. Certainly Nepal's extraordinary landscape poses some unique challenges for the delivery of services. Chronic natural disaster risk plays a part as well and may become even more influential as we see changing weather patterns associated with climate change. A weak sense of accountability between the State and the citizen has certainly not helped as decision makers, policy makers and implementers have not been receiving the necessary signals and feedback from their 'clients' on performance, and on what policies are working and what policies aren't delivering the results they expect. And the civil war was a lost decade, the price of which has yet to be fully felt. But the most difficult issue to address in terms of Nepal's poverty, is perhaps the pattern of widening inequality that has started to take root over the last 20 years in particular. This makes progress on poverty much more difficult as you need to raise all boats dramatically, in order for the poorest and most marginalized to feel some benefits. And such uneven development is inherently unstable, bringing with it another set of political challenges.

9. What is your observation on the very slow progress on Nepal's peace process? Will it reach to a logical end within the timeline specified?

Again, I'm not so negative. 2009 was surely a disappointment in terms of tangible progress. But by international standards, the preceding three years were pretty extraordinary. So with the benefit of some perspective, the balance sheet is still on the positive side. Let's just hope the pace quickens in 2010 though. There is so much yet to be done.

10. What is UN's vision for New Nepal, say 10 years from now?

As an outside actor, we aren't in the business of 'visioning' for our Member States. Rather, we are about helping realize visions that have emerged from legitimate local processes. In Nepal we draw our compass headings on the 'vision' from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In there, we find a vision of a long term transformation process that promises peace and prosperity through respect for human rights, good governance, social, political and economic inclusion of all communities, and greater equality among the people of Nepal, from East to West, from the Terai to the hills and mountains, from city to country side. In today's Nepal, the accident of birth has too great a determining role in your life-long development prospects. The New Nepal I read about in the Peace Agreement is one where Nepal's amazing diversity is seen as a great asset and where individuals are given the same chance as any other citizen to pursue their hopes and dreams to the best of their abilities. This transformation will not happen over-night of course and may take as long as a generation.

What we can certainly hope to see in 10 years, is greater economic development and stability for Nepal. Hydropower development. Increased foreign direct investment. Local jobs rather than overseas jobs. A widely held sense of security – for families and for businesses. The eradication of hunger and malnutrition. The elimination of impunity. All these can be achieved in a decade and I will be proud to say that the UN family in Nepal was right there with the Nepali people supporting them in this historic period.

**END **



Women central to efforts to deal with climate change, says new UNFPA report

UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund, released its annual State of World Population report on 18 November 2009. The publication argues that women bear the disproportionate burden of climate change, but have so far been largely overlooked in the debate about how to address problems of rising seas, droughts, melting glaciers and extreme weather. "This is a vital time in Nepal to re-invigorate the debate and identify the actions needed to respond to population issues and women's empowerment in the face of climate change. We hope the report will contribute to the debate," commented on the occasion Ian McFarlane, UNFPA Representative in Nepal.

Workshop held on Governance of Nepal's Heritage in a Federal System



Kosh Psd Acharya addressing the audience during the workshop.

Photo: UNESCO

Kathmandu, 30 November: A workshop entitled Governance of Nepal's Heritage in a Federal System was held November 25 at the Center for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD) in Buddhanagar, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu. The workshop was convened to inform Nepal's on-going discussion on federalism by addressing the topic of governance and management of Nepal's Heritage as part of discussion series "Informing the Debate on Education and Culture in Federal System of Government in Nepal" supported by UNESCO Office in Kathmandu.

The workshop explored the present and future management of cultural and natural heritage in Nepal through the presentation of nine thematic discussion papers focusing on key institutions such as National Parks, Public Libraries and Museums. The presentations outlined the present modality of stewardship by different levels of government and explored pragmatic, technical and jurisdictional aspects of relevant institutions and site management under a federal system, including points of comparison with other federal states. Overall the presentations stressed the vital importance of considering the future of these institutions during the constitution-building process.

The workshop was attended by over 80 participants representing the Constituent Assembly, Ministry of Federal Affairs, Constituent Assembly, Parliamentary Affairs and Culture, Department of Archaeology, municipalities, academia, civil society groups and the international community, among others. There was enthusiastic participation by all these stakeholder groups throughout the event. Participants were very eager to engage in discussion on this critical issue, which is just beginning to be explored in such forums.

The event was opened with welcome speeches by Man Bahadur BK, National Manager of CCD and Dr. Colin Kaiser, Head of UNESCO Office in Kathmandu.

Dr. Kaiser stated that the present discussion on cultural and natural heritage institutions will serve as the entry point to open up a broader discussion on culture and federalism in Nepal. "This is just the beginning" he stressed, "the domain of culture is vast, so tomorrow and the day after, we will be working in new themes and our group will be expanding". Dr. Kaiser expressed hope that a formalized and expanded support group for culture and federalism will continue to convene such events and advocate for related cultural concerns both within the Kathmandu Valley and across the country.

US students raise more than USD 10,000 for Nepal water project



Kathmandu, 30 November: Students at Bentley University in Boston, have raised funds amounting to more than USD 10,000 for UN HABITAT's Water for Asian Cities Programme. The money is being used for a rainwater conservation project in Nepal.

The money were raised under the Project H2O campaign by a team of dedicated students of Bentley University to support the clean water initiatives Nepal.

Bentley International Student's Association, Bentley Greek Council, Bentley Spring Day Donations, community members and pay pals of websites made the donations amounting to USD 10,836.

The monies were handed to UN-HABITAT by the President of the campaign Mr. Ankur Agrawal on 4 November 2009.

UN HABITAT has allotted the fund to a rainwater conservation project launched in Lalitpur Municipality, Nepal as part of the agency's Water for Asian Cities programme. The idea is to demonstrate rain and groundwater conservation at the community level, and to restore traditional water sources by helping replenish ground supplies.

Site Managers Experience Sharing Workshop



Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site managers discussed concerns and shared ideas during the workshop

Photo: UNESCO

Kathmandu, 30 November: UNESCO Kathmandu Office collaborated with the New Delhi Cluster Office and Nepal's Department of Archaeology to hold the three and a half day Site Managers Experience Sharing Workshop: With a Special Focus on Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, which ran from 24-27 October. The event provided a unique opportunity for site managers from all seven monuments zones of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site to build upon their shared capacity through discussions on common management concerns and issues related to the implementation of World Heritage convention, especially the on-going efforts within the site's Integrated Management Plan (IMP).

In order to facilitate sub-regional solidarity and professional networking, the workshop included participants from the World Heritage Sites of Galle Fort in Sri Lanka and Hampi in India, as well as from urban heritage city of Udaipur, India who provided a very pertinent view of heritage managers from rapidly urbanizing historic centres. Representatives from three municipalities of Kathmandu Valley, the Village Development Committee of Changu Narayan and local committee preservation trusts, which manage monuments zones were also present. Over the course of the workshop participants visited each of the seven monument zones and on-site presentations were given to draw attention to site-specific concerns, which ranged from street vendor encroachment to the need to provide technical support and financial incentives to private homeowners occupying historic properties

The workshop revealed several key challenges, which site managers face in the implementation of the IMP and these will lay the foundation for a continuous reassessment of site management strategies. The participants expressed great interest in holding such workshops on a more regular basis in order to foster an on-going exchange between municipalities and with the Department of Archaeology. Participants also hoped to continue to expand the dialogue and involve more site managers from other countries within the region. UNESCO Kathmandu believes regular stakeholder interaction is vital to successful World Heritage Site management in Nepal and hopes to further facilitate such events in order to promote adaptive and innovative site management strategies in the country and throughout the region.

National Symposium held in Kathmandu on Education and Federalism



Participants of the Symposium. Photo: UNESCO

Kathmandu, 18 November: A National Symposium on Education and Federalism was held at the Hotel de L'Annapurna in Kathmandu on 18 November 2009. The Symposium was organised by the Education and Federalism Support Group (EFSG), a group of local education experts interested in how education will be organised and delivered in a federal system of Government in Nepal. The group was initiated and supported by UNESCO Office Kathmandu.

The Symposium was attended by over 80 delegates including Constituent Assembly members, Ministry of Education officials, representatives of teacher unions, a range of other stakeholder groups and representatives of development agencies. The purpose of the Symposium was to publicise the work of the EFSG and to promote discussion and gain feedback on how various aspects of Nepal's education system could be managed in the future.

The EFSG has been consulting widely among the education community in Kathmandu and in regional areas on six key areas of interest, exploring issues and receiving suggestions about how they could be managed in a federal system of government. The six areas are

⇒ Free and Compulsory Education

⇒ Federalism and Private Schooling: Issues and Implications for Nepal

⇒ Language Issues in Education in the Context of Federal Nepal

⇒ Bridges and Ladders in Education: Integration of Various Learning Modes and Pathways

⇒ Teacher Management and Development in Federal System of Government in Nepal

⇒ Financing Education in Federal Nepal

The Symposium provided an opportunity to present ideas and opinions on each of the key areas that were gathered during the consultation process.

The Symposium was inaugurated by Mr Nilambar Acharya, Chairperson, Constitutional Committee who delivered an opening speech to the assembled delegates. The Head of the UNESCO Office, Dr Colin Kaiser, also delivered an address.



Chairperson of Constitutional Committee Mr. Nilambar Acharya Inaugurating the Symposium . Photo: UNESCO

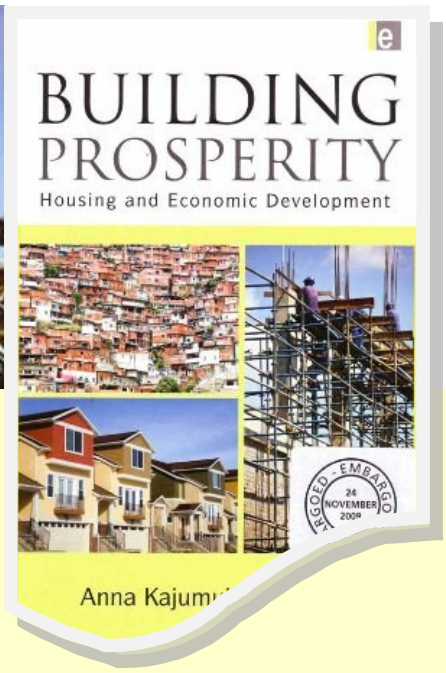
'UNESCO wants to support the Government and local experts in promoting dialogue and informing debate,' Dr Kaiser said. 'This is not about what the federal state of Nepal will look like. It's about how government services will be delivered and about listening to the opinions of the people,' he said.

The EFSG will consider all the suggestions made at the Symposium in developing its work plans and will continue to promote discussion and debate. The Group will also begin exploring other key areas in addition to the six presented at the Symposium.

UN HABITAT's new publication launched in Nepal







Kathmandu, 30 November: UN HABITAT launched its new publication titled "Building Prosperity: Housing and Economic Development" globally on 24 November, 2009 by organizing various events in more than 100 different countries including Nepal.

The book had been launched to coincide with Goteborg Award distribution ceremony, which was awarded to author of the book, Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN HABITAT the UN Agency for the built environment. She was honoured for her contribution in sustainable development of environment and housing sector.

Speaking at the programme, Habitat Manager of UN HABITA Nepal, Prafulla Man Singh Pradhan told that the contribution of the supply and consumption of housing on economic growth has been explained with the support of detailed case studies and examples of best practices in the book. He believed that it would be easy, better and effective to adopt these successful practices rather than looking for new approaches for housing in Nepal.

Secretary General of United Nations, Ban Ki-moon has expressed that the book can be helpful to identify concrete policies and institutions to enable governments to incorporate broader vision for the housing sector that goes beyond the traditional argument of social need and towards an enhanced contribution of housing to accelerated economic growth.

Despite having central role in economic growth, housing is treated as a sector of mere social good. The book was developed to fill the exiting gap between housing and economic growth. It has aimed to raise awareness about the central role of housing in economic development, and to propagate this message in academic as well as the policymaking and investment circles, Tibaijuka said.

In her book, she has recommended to pursue housing provision vigorously, given its importance to social and economic growth, development and the creation of national wealth.



Participants of the report launch programme. Photo: UN-HABITAT

Early recovery works in Sunsari



Logistical support provided by UNDP: Data been entered in the computers for efficient Comprehensive Compensation Package distribution. Photo: UNDP

Early recovery works are ongoing in the four villages of Sunsari district affected by the Koshi river flood 15 months ago. A total of 7563 families were affected including 1422 landless families.

The major agencies providing support in early recovery works are UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, Save the Children, World vision International, ADB, Plan Nepal, local NGOs and Government Line Agencies. Early recovery works are coordinated through the cluster system. Five clusters such as WASH (water, hygiene and sanitation), Agriculture, Social sector, Livelihood and Infrastructure were developed to coordinate more efforts and support to maximize fund collaboration , avoid resource duplication and optimum use of new technologies. For better coordination, the individual cluster groups, led by the concerned Government line agencies also meet fortnightly.

The District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) has been taking the lead in the implementation of recovery programme with logistical and technical support from UNDP. UNDP has established a coordination office within the premises of the DDC in Sunsari and provided two computers with appropriate software database, including networking of all computers, two small generators for backup and a printer. Two data entry associates have been provided through the Local Development Fund in the District Development Committee to manage the data for the distribution of Government

Comprehensive Compensation Package to Koshi flood victims. Under the Comprehensive Compensation Package, the government is providing compensation in four sectors such as land, crops, shelter and 2 Katha (.066 hectares) of land that will be purchased by the government to give it to landless families. All the calculations are done in the computer database after verification with the government

records. The calculated amount is directly transferred into the affected household's bank account. Under this provision, the first installment will cover 50% of the land compensation and 100% of crop compensation.

As of 17 November 2009, 2763 families have received the Comprehensive Compensation Package amounting to 32 million

rupees. The distribution started from the worst affected area- ward 9 of Shripur VDC. After completing this rocess, compensation will be provided to households with damaged houses and land to the landless families.

UN HABITAT and Water Aid Nepal establish partnership to initiate WATSAN Project in poor clusters of selected municipalities of Nepal



Solid waste disposal



Turbid water through tap



Quality of water during heavy rain

Kathmandu, 30 November: Despite having 89 percent coverage of water supply in urban areas of Nepal, only 13 percent of the population has access to safe drinking water. The situation is even worse, when it comes about sanitation. The gap between sanitation and water supply facilities at national level is distinct, with 46 percent coverage of latrines and 76 percent coverage of basic water supply.

Government of Nepal (GoN) has announced its National Goal with the target to reach 100 percent water and sanitation coverage by 2017. However, most of the efforts from government and non-government agencies have primarily focused towards reaching rural beneficiaries. Urban poor are not getting priority as they are often neglected or assumed to be privileged with basic services.

Hence, these inhabitants of urban and peri-urban areas are still deprived from adequate water and sanitation (WATSAN) facilities, and are living in degrading urban environment.

UN HABITAT Water for Asian Cities Programme Nepal and Water Aid Nepal has recently made an agreement to launch a project titled 'Integrated Water and Sanitation Services to the urban poor communities in Kamalamai and Itahari Municipalities in Nepal.

Both of these municipalities had recently completed Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (STWSSSP) through Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS). Similarly, ADB funded Urban Environment Improvement Project (UEIP) is going on in Kamalamai. by Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC).

In both project areas, DUDBC is also conducting poverty mapping, gender assessment and need identification project with support of UN HABITAT.

The project will select the poor clusters in these two municipalities on the basis of poor households and clusters identified by poverty mapping recently completed by DUDBC to intervene the project. It will prioritize its activities on the basis of the projects identified by need identification study. In total around 16,000 urban poor population will be benefited by the project.

The project has been expected to prepare participatory water, sanitation and hygiene improvement plans for the selected communities of both municipalities. It will be supportive in improving heath and sanitation situation in addition to increasing sanitation practices of the target communities, which demonstrate good practices and technologies for replication in other municipal areas. It will increase awareness and capacities of government and non-government actors to deliver adequate WATSAN services so as to increase coverage of WATSAN services.

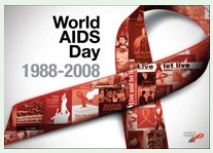
The project will facilitate municipalities; develop Water, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement (WESHI) Plan for the selected communities; and disseminate learning experiences to institutionalize pro poor governance at municipal level.

Based on the WESHI plan, the project will construct new and improve existing 90 water points along with the rehabilitation of 7 water supply schemes to increase coverage of water supply.

Similarly, it will construct 750 latrines at household level, 350 in Itahari and 400 in Kamalamai; and rehab drainage systems for improving neighbourhood environmental sanitation with an aim of total sanitation and providing access of maximum people to improved sanitation. It has also planned to declare open defecation free to 13 communities as well.

The project will raise awareness on WATSAN issues, and promote proper water, sanitation and hygiene practices to improve health condition of inhabitants. It will initiate "Water Safety Plan" at community level for preventing water sources from contamination. The plan will be promoted integrating sanitation and hygiene promotion so that holistic approach could be undertaken to ensure proper water and sanitation services in the area.

UN Events Calendar for December



December 1: World AIDS Day
In 1988, the General Assembly expressed deep concern at the pandemic proportions of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Noting that the World Health Organization had declared 1 December 1988 World AIDS Day, the Assembly stressed the importance of observing that occasion (resolution 43/15). URL: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/aidsday/index.html

December 2: International Day For The Abolition Of Slavery
The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, recalls the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (resolution 317 (IV) of 2 December 1949). URL: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/slavery

December 3: International Day Of Disabled Persons
In 1992, at the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled



Persons (1983-1992), the General Assembly proclaimed 3 December as the International Day of Disabled Persons (resolution 47/3). The Decade was a period of raising awareness and enacting measures to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and to provide them with equal opportunities. Subsequently, the Assembly appealed to Member States to highlight the observance of the Day in order to further integrate people with disabilities into society (resolution 47/88).

December 5: International Volunteer Day
International Volunteer Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 40/212 on 17 December 1985.

December 7: International Civil Aviation Day
The United Nations General Assembly by resolution officially recognized 7 December as International Civil Aviation Day and listed it as an official UN day. The purpose of the global celebration is to generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation in the social and economic development of States, and of the role of International Civil Aviation Organization in promoting the safety, efficiency and regularity of international air transport.

December 9: International Anti-Corruption Day



By resolution 58/4 of 31 October 2003, the General Assembly designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day. This decision was taken in order to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in combating and preventing it. URL: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/events/anti_corruption

December 10: Human Rights Day
Respect for human rights and human dignity "is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world", the General Assembly declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1950, all States and interested organizations were invited by the General Assembly to observe 10 December as Human Rights Day (resolution 423(V)). The Day marks the anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Over the years, a whole network of human rights instruments and mechanisms has been developed to ensure the primacy of human rights and to confront human rights violations wherever they occur. URL: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/humanrights



December 11: International Mountain Day
The UN General Assembly designated 11 December as 'International Mountain Day'. This decision results from the success of the UN International Year of Mountains in 2002, which increased global awareness of the importance of mountains, stimulated the establishment of national committees in 78 countries and strengthened alliances through promoting the creation of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, known as the 'Mountain Partnership (WSSD, Johannesburg, 2 September 2002).

December 18: International Migrants Day
On 4 December 2000, the General Assembly, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, proclaimed 18 December International Migrants Day (resolution 55/93). On that day, in 1990, the Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (resolution 45/158). Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to observe International Migrants Day through the dissemination of information on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, and through the sharing of experiences and the design of actions to ensure their protection. URL: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/events/migrants

December 19: United Nations Day For South-South Cooperation
By resolution 58/220 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly decided to declare 19 December United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. This was the date on which the General Assembly endorsed the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The Assembly also urged all relevant United Nations organizations and multilateral institutions to intensify their efforts to effectively mainstream the use of South-South cooperation in the design, formulation and implementation of their regular programmes and to consider increasing allocations of human, technical and financial resources for supporting South-South cooperation initiatives. URL: http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/events/south/index.html

December 20: International Human Solidarity Day
International Human Solidarity Day was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005 as an initiative in the fight against poverty. (A/RES/60/209).